United Nations E/CN.5/2018/NGO/5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
30 October 2017
English
Original: French

Commission for Social Development
Fifty-sixth session
31 January–7 February 2018
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all

Statement submitted by Aube nouvelle pour la femme et le développement (ANFD), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

17-19127 (E) 091117 141117

Please recycle

Statement

Combating poverty by supporting empowerment

Poverty has many causes and takes on different forms. Therefore, the strategies for its elimination must also be sufficiently varied in nature.

The development of a cross-sectoral concept seems necessary for the following reasons:

- Practical and tangible empowerment, particularly of impoverished women, and the participation of disadvantaged populations in the development process help bring about a sustainable improvement in living conditions.
- The so-called "informal" sector has so far been underestimated in terms of its economic, social, political and democratic impact on the development of the countries of the South and on the fight against poverty.

External support for empowerment should be underpinned by the following essential principles:

- Support measures should not be a substitute for the efforts of beneficiary populations and should not place a burden on the persons or groups in receipt of support.
- Support should bolster existing self-help initiatives. If such initiatives do not exist, the support should serve to kick-start them.
- The participation of the populations concerned in all decisions taken in the framework of cooperation should be a prerequisite for support activities.
- Support should be intended for groups in the first instance.
- The trade-off between what is "possible" — in terms of self-help — and what is "necessary" — in terms of support — should not be left to the sole discretion of the supporting entity but be the subject of a dialogue with beneficiaries, be they individuals or groups.
- External support for self-help should have a scope limited to what is strictly necessary in order to avoid over-promoting partners.
- Impoverished populations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of the South, and, in this context, NGOs working on the ground and decision-makers within governments and governmental organizations of the South play a particular role in that they can influence the national circumstances — frameworks — that determine the space and the leeway given to empowerment activities, as well as the framework within which external support for empowerment activities operates.
- NGOs of the North may, as part of a specific project, take responsibility for strengthening autonomous organizations of impoverished populations and thereby create conditions conducive to their participation in empowerment projects in the framework of development cooperation.
- The self-help initiatives of disadvantaged populations should be supported.
- The autonomy of self-help organizations should be strengthened and efforts should be made to modify poverty-generating social structures. It is important to make use of all instruments of promotion in this process and to adopt those instruments on a permanent basis. They should be brought to bear in such a way that external assistance becomes part of local self-help initiatives. To that

end, local self-help organizations should be able to determine the course and nature of support activities.

- Knowledge of the self-help experiences of impoverished populations should be acquired through case studies and the life stories of the persons concerned.
- Information should be gathered from the partner government on its interest in cooperating in the fight against poverty by supporting self-help initiatives and on the necessary preconditions for carrying out projects in these areas. The purpose of this information is to enable the partner government to play an active role in carrying out these projects or to at least tolerate them.